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Art Unit: 1725

Examiner: Johnson, J.

Atty Docket: END-00-0034US1

I, John A.Evans, am authorized to sign on behalf of International Business Machines Corporation and declare as follows:

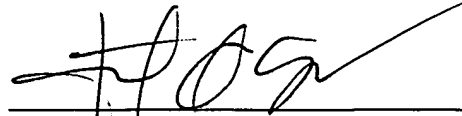
1. U.S. Patent 6,217,671 to Henderson, *et al.* has been cited against the present invention under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).
2. The authors of the reference patent are Donald W. Henderson and James Spalik.
3. Henderson and Spalik are co-inventors of the present invention.
4. At the time of invention, the reference patent, and the present invention were under obligation of assignment to International Business Machines Corporation, the assignee of the present invention.

2. This application, and the reference patent, have been assigned to International Business Machines Corporation.

3. All statements made herein of my own knowledge are true. All statements made on information and belief are believed to be true. These statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are

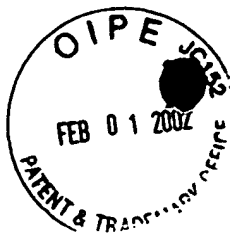
punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both, unlike 18 U.S.C. 1001 and may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issuing thereon.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. A. Evans', is written over a horizontal line.

John A. Evans, Reg. No 44,100
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Date: February 1, 2002



APPENDIX
(Amended Claim)

Please amend claim 9 as follows:

9. (Amended) A method of protecting tin solderable surfaces, according to claim 1, wherein said complexing agent is selected from the group consisting of dicarboxylic acids[,] and dibasic acids [,and complexing agents].

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